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FM COMDT COGARD WASHINGTON DC//G-W//
TO ALCOAST
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ALCOAST 500/03

COMDTNOTE 5100

SUBJ: HOLIDAY TRAFFIC SAFETY

1. INDICATIONS THAT THE HOLIDAY SEASON IS QUICKLY APPROACHING ARE ALL AROUND US - THE LEAVES ON THE TREES ARE CHANGING COLOR, DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME HAS RETURNED, HOLIDAY SIGHTS AND SOUNDS ABOUND, AND THE TEMPERATURES HAVE BEGUN TO FALL. ALONG WITH THESE CHANGES CAN COME A SENSE OF EXPECTATION, OVERLOADED SCHEDULES AND THE POTENTIAL FOR INCREASED STRESS AND ACCIDENTS. MANY MEMBERS OF OUR COAST GUARD FAMILY WILL BE TRAVELING TO SHARE THE HOLIDAYS WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS, OFTEN DRIVING LONG DISTANCES, BRAVING WINTER WEATHER AND, SOMETIMES, CELEBRATING WITH ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES. THE UNFORTUNATE REALITY IS THAT WITHOUT ADEQUATE PREPARATION AND MANAGEMENT OF RISKS, THIS JOYOUS SEASON MAY BE MARKED BY TRAGEDY AND SORROW.

2. EACH YEAR WINTER HOLIDAY TRAFFIC INCIDENTS AND FATALITIES RISE ACROSS THE NATION. ON AVERAGE, 52 PERCENT OF THOSE INCIDENTS ARE ALCOHOL-RELATED. IN FY03 THERE WERE A TOTAL OF 234 COAST GUARD MOTORCYCLE, MOPED, ATV, AND PASSENGER VEHICLE MISHAPS. FIVE COAST GUARD PERSONNEL DIED IN CAR CRASHES AND MOTORCYCLE/ATV MISHAPS CLAIMED THE LIVES OF THREE OTHER MEMBERS. THESE TRAGIC LOSSES REINFORCE THE NEED FOR US TO CONTINUE TO EMPHASIZE TO OUR PERSONNEL THE IMPORTANCE OF APPLYING THE SAME RISK MANAGEMENT APPROACH TO DRIVING AS WE DO TO OUR WORK ACTIVITIES. IDENTIFY THE TASK AT HAND, IDENTIFY HAZARDS ASSOCIATED WITH EACH PHASE OF THE TASK, ASSESS THE POTENTIAL RISKS FOR EACH HAZARD IDENTIFIED, IDENTIFY ALL AVAILABLE OPTIONS OR SAFEGUARDS, EVALUATE THE RISKS VERSUS THE BENEFITS, EXECUTE THE DECISION, AND MONITOR THE SITUATION AS IT DEVELOPS.

3. TO REINFORCE THIS APPROACH, APPLY THE FOLLOWING SAFETY PRINCIPLES WHEN YOU PLAN YOUR HOLIDAY TRAVEL:

A. DRINKING AND DRIVING. THE MESSAGE IS SIMPLE - IF YOU ARE GOING TO DRINK, DONT DRIVE. STAY OUT OF THE DRIVERS SEAT, AND DONT BE A PASSENGER IN A VEHICLE WHEN SOMEONE ELSE HAS BEEN DRINKING. YOU HAVE A CHOICE - STAY WHERE YOU ARE, USE A DESIGNATED DRIVER, OR CALL A CAB. THE NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION REPORTS THAT THE HIGHEST RATES OF CRASHES OCCUR BETWEEN NINE PM AND THREE AM ON FRIDAY, SATURDAY AND SUNDAY, SO GO OUT EARLY AND COME HOME EARLY. DEVELOP A PLAN BEFORE GOING OUT AND FOLLOW IT.

B. WEAR YOUR SEAT BELT AND HELMET. ONE OF THE SIMPLEST WAYS TO PROTECT YOURSELF IS TO WEAR YOUR SEAT BELT OR MOTORCYCLE HELMET. MOST STATES HAVE LAWS REQUIRING SEAT BELT USE AND REQUIRING CHILDREN TO BE SECURED IN CHILD SAFETY SEATS. THIS YEAR FROM 17 NOVEMBER THROUGH 30 NOVEMBER, THOUSANDS OF CIVILIAN LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES WILL BE STEPPING UP THE ENFORCEMENT OF SEAT BELT LAWS IN THEIR INDIVIDUAL STATES IN A CAMPAIGN CALLED, CLICK IT OR TICKET. ALL COAST GUARD UNITS SHOULD PUBLICIZE THIS CAMPAIGN AND TAKE APPROPRIATE MEASURES TO PROMOTE SEAT BELT AND CHILD RESTRAINT USE BY UNIT PERSONNEL. FACILITIES WITH CONTROLLED ENTRY POINTS SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN THIS CAMPAIGN BY ENFORCING USE OF SEAT BELTS AND CHILD SAFETY SEATS IN ALL VEHICLES TRANSITING THE GATE.

C. FATIGUE. FATIGUE CAN BE AS DEADLY AS DRINKING AND DRIVING. IF YOU HAVE ONLY A LIMITED AMOUNT OF TIME FOR YOUR TRIP TO BE WITH

LOVED ONES, CONSIDER AN ALTERNATE FORM OF TRANSPORTATION, LIKE A PLANE, TRAIN OR BUS. IF YOU MUST DRIVE, PLAN HOW FAR YOU ARE GOING TO DRIVE EACH DAY. BE CONSERVATIVE WHEN ESTIMATING YOUR DAILY DRIVING DISTANCE. START YOUR TRIP IN THE MORNING AFTER YOU HAVE HAD A GOOD NIGHTS REST, NOT AFTER A LONG DAY AT WORK. CALL AHEAD AND MAKE RESERVATIONS TO STAY OVERNIGHT SO YOU WILL HAVE GUARANTEED LODGING. DRIVE DURING DAYLIGHT HOURS AND HAVE A DRIVING PARTNER WHENEVER POSSIBLE.

D. VEHICLE PREPAREDNESS. PRIOR TO DEPARTURE TAKE SOME TIME TO PREPARE YOUR VEHICLE FOR THE CONDITIONS AHEAD. CHECK YOUR WINDSHIELD WIPERS, TIRES, AND BRAKES. MAKE SURE YOU HAVE AN ICE SCRAPER, FLARES, REFLECTORS, JUMPER CABLES, AND CELL PHONE AS PART OF YOUR EMERGENCY KIT, AND KEEP IT IN YOUR VEHICLE. IF YOU ARE TRAVELING IN AREAS WHERE THERE MAY BE SNOW OR ICE, ENSURE YOU HAVE A FLASHLIGHT, SNOW CHAINS, SAND AND A SMALL SHOVEL. FOR PERSONAL NEEDS, INCLUDE A BLANKET, BOTTLED WATER AND SOME NON-PERISHABLE FOOD ITEMS TO HAVE ON HAND IN THE EVENT YOU GET STRANDED.

4. AS THE HOLIDAYS APPROACH, COMMANDING OFFICERS AND OFFICERS IN CHARGE SHOULD TAKE THE TIME TO TALK WITH THEIR PERSONNEL ABOUT MOTOR VEHICLE SAFETY. THE FOLLOWING RESOURCES CAN BE USED TO AUGMENT PRE-HOLIDAY SAFETY BRIEFINGS OR STAND DOWNS:

A. NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION (NHTSA) AT [HTTP://WWW.NHTSA.DOT.GOV/](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/)

B. MOTORCYCLE SAFETY FOUNDATION AT [HTTP://WWW.MSF-USA.ORG/](http://www.msf-usa.org/)

5. TAKE THE TIME TO PLAN AHEAD, AND MANAGE YOUR RISKS. SAFETY IS NO ACCIDENT, AND HAVING NO ACCIDENTS WILL HELP TO ENSURE YOUR HOLIDAY SEASON IS A JOYOUS ONE.

6. COMDT (G-WKS-2) POC IS MR. MICHAEL L. SMITH, 202-267-1870.

7. INTERNET RELEASE AUTHORIZED.

8. RADM KEN VENUTO, ASSISTANT COMMANDANT FOR HUMAN RESOURCES, SENDS.

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